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Ministry of Forests

QUESNEL ALLOWABLE ANNUAL CUT INCREASED

VICTORIA – The allowable annual cut for the Quesnel timber supply area will be increased to help battle the mountain pine beetle epidemic, B.C. chief forester Larry Pedersen announced today.

"This increase is crucial if we are to have any success in limiting the rate of spread of the beetle, and in salvaging the large and growing areas of damaged timber," Pedersen said. "The current allowable annual cut hasn't been able to keep pace with the beetle. As a result, about six million cubic metres of timber now stands dead or dying in the Quesnel timber supply area. And that figure is expected to grow significantly by this fall."

Effective July 1, the new allowable annual cut will be 3.248 million cubic metres, an increase of about 908,000 cubic metres per year from the last allowable annual cut set in 1996.

The determination is consistent with the biodiversity objectives identified in the Cariboo Chilcotin land use plan biodiversity conservation strategy. Environmental factors including lake, stream and wetland areas; mule deer, caribou and moose habitat; and at-risk wildlife were also considered.

"I expect this determination to leave the forests in a less damaged condition in the future than if we made no effort to contain the beetle or salvage the killed timber," Pedersen said.

Under the Forest Act, allowable annual cut decisions must be reassessed every five years. Forest Service staff will monitor the beetle infestation, and the chief forester will re-examine the determination before the usual five-year term, if required.

"This is not a long-term solution, but a temporary, extraordinary measure designed to deal with a catastrophic mountain pine beetle infestation," Pedersen said.

The Quesnel timber supply area covers 1.6 million hectares and includes the city of Quesnel and the communities of Wells, Nazko and Kluskus.

The chief forester's determination is an independent professional judgment based on information ranging from technical forestry reports and public input to the government's social and economic goals.

Quesnel is the 14th of 37 allowable annual cut determinations for timber supply areas in the second provincewide timber supply review. The review provides an up-to-date assessment of timber supply in each of B.C.'s 37 timber supply areas and 34 tree farm licences based on the best available information and current management practices.

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A copy of the chief forester's allowable annual cut determination for the Quesnel timber supply area and the summary of public input on the Quesnel timber supply review are available at the Ministry of Forests Web site athttp://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tsb and at the following Forest Service offices:

- Quesnel forest district 250-992-4400
- Cariboo forest region 250-398-4345

For more information on the timber supply review, visit http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tsb on the Internet.

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Visit the province's Web site at http://www.gov.bc.ca/ for online information and services.